

Message Text

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17
ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SR-02 ORM-01 VO-03 SCA-01 SCS-03 A-01 OPR-02

AID-05 IGA-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /085 W
----- 062064

R 080503Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5666
INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
CINCPAC
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
AMCONSUL SYDNEY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 2889

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AS, VS, SREF
SUBJECT: POLICY TOWARDS ADMITTING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: CANBERRA 2833

1. THERE IS STILL CONFUSION ABOUT THE GOA'S POLICY ON ADMIT-
TING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. PRESS REPORTS FROM KINGSTON STATE
THAT WHITLAM IS DETERMINED TO ADMIT ONLY A TOKEN NUMBER AT
MOST ONLY A FEW HUNDRED, ALTHOUGH STORIES FILED IN CANBERRA
SUGGEST THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER MAY BE AS HIGH AS 3 TO 4,000.
SENIOR OFFICIALS IN DFA WHO ARE NOT SYMPATHETIC TO THE WHIT-
LAM GOVERNMENT TELL US THAT THERE IS NO FIRM POLICY AND THAT
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DFA IS SENDING FRANTIC CABLES TO SINGAPORE AND JAKARTA IN AN

EFFORT TO INSURE THAT THE VESSELS CARRYING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES
OFF SINGAPORE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PUT TO SEA.

2. THE SENIOR DFA OFFICIALS WHO HAVE DISCUSSED THESE MATTERS
WITH US HAVE TOLD US THEY ARE ASHAMED OF THE WAY THE
GOVERNMENT IS BEHAVING AND REPORT THAT A NUMBER OF THEIR
COLLEAGUES (SOME OF WHOM ARE IN SENSITIVE POSITIONS) WHO
HAVE VIETNAMESE WIVES AND RELATIVES ARE DEEPLY DISTURBED
AND PREPARED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. WE BELIEVE LEAKS
FROM DFA WILL OCCUR WHICH WILL GIVE THE OPPOSITION PLENTY
OF AMMUNITION TO USE IN THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON VIET-
MAN WHICH REOPENS ON MAY 13.

3. RELATED TO ALL THIS WAS PRIVATE CONVERSATION I HAD MAY
8 WITH PETER HASTINGS, ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S BEST INFORMED AND
RELIABLE JOURNALISTS, WHO SAID THAT HE BELIEVES AUSTRALIA
WOULD ACCEPT A TOTAL OF NO MORE THAN 2,000 TO 3,000 VIET-
NAMESE REFUGEES. THE ONLY EXCEPTION WOULD BE IF A LARGER
NUMBER MANAGED TO ARRIVE IN AUSTRALIAN HARBORS. IN THAT
CASE, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR AUSTRALIA TO TURN
THEM AWAY. HASTINGS FURTHER COMMENTED THAT A PRINCIPAL REA-
SON FOR GOA'S OPPOSITION TO RECEIVING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES
IS FEAR THAT THIS WOULD GIVE RISE TO ANOTHER QTE CROAT END
QTE SITUATION IN AUSTRALIA. HE WAS REFERRING TO POLITICAL
STRIFE AMONGST YUGOSLAVS NOW IN AUSTRALIA THAT HAS CREATED
DIFFICULTIES AND EMBARRASMENTS FOR GOA. HASTINGS FORECAST,
HOWEVER, THAT AUSTRALIA IN THE YEARS AHEAD WOULD BE THE HAVEN
FOR MANY THOUSAND OF REFUGEES FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA, INDO-
NESIA AND ELSEWHERE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC WHEN AND AS DIFFI-
CULTIES, DANGERS, AND DISSENSION INEVITABLY OCCURED IN THESE
AREAS.
GREEN

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